As Rose and McClafferty (2003: 29) put it:

> Writing is something you can work on. In very specific ways you can move parts of a sentence around; you can try addressing the reader more directly; you can talk about and try out some of the stylistic things a peer does that appeal to you. ... Writing is craftwork.

To take this seriously means making the space for doctoral researchers to experiment with writing, at the same time that they take methods courses, undertake fieldwork, and engage with the relevant field of knowledge production.

There is no set formula for this, but we think that conversations about writing as an embodied activity can be one place to start. Both of us prefer to work at home and often intersperse writing with housework, which provides space for reflection. We work best in the morning, although we can both work through to the mid-afternoon when the pressure is really on. Both of us have a dictionary and a thesaurus on the table beside the computer, and use them frequently when the same verbs and nouns appear too frequently. We have both separately established this routine for writing, but we do not impose this particularity on our students. Rather, in talking about our own practices, we encourage our students to make explicit how they create a regular time-space-rhythm for writing.

We also set practice exercises for our doctoral writers. Some are able to discipline themselves sufficiently to experiment with different approaches to writing. Others are not. Here we find it is helpful to ask them to go back to questions of nominalization, Theme, and sentence and paragraph construction to deconstruct their own writing. Reworkings of a text in which they vary different elements such as first or third person, passive or active voice, or different orders of moves, can also be helpful.

There is also some mileage in 'cloning the form' of particular admired writers. This requires doctoral writers to analyse the syntactic strategies and language choices of the accomplished and published, and then attempt to reproduce them. But – a caveat here. We have also seen and read some very desperate simulations of high French theory: these are to be avoided at all costs by all but the linguistically accomplished!

We have used our reading groups to create opportunities for reading aloud. We find that it is often very helpful to ask doctoral researchers to read their work aloud – to themselves and to peer postgraduates. Rose and McClafferty (2003: 29) argue that this is an important step in learning to improve the craft of writing, and we agree.

> Reading one's prose animates what is too often a dry, unengaged production and use of text. You hear your writing. And others hear, as well as read it, too.

Hearing the words, distanced on the page, adopting the stance of a reader, allows doctoral writers a different position from which to self-critique. It can help them craft the 'flow of a text', one of the hardest aspects of a text to judge. Reading aloud, for example, makes it clear that the choreography of an argument is neither set to a funereal dirge, nor to a frenetic reel. Dissertation writing must develop a tempo which moves the reader at a regular and pleasing pace through the various points and counterpoints. It is this flow which makes the doctoral argument not only logical, but a good read, and where students can benefit from sharing their work with others.

Throughout this book we have suggested a number of deconstructive tools that can be used in supervision pedagogies. Some of these involve the supervisor and student in cooperative textual analysis. We also suggest that this dialogic approach be continued into joint editing practice. Rather than take a student's work away to make comments, it can be productive for supervisors to combine a responsive reading with cooperative editing. In the first instance, supervisors might talk through the text, pointing out the spots where changes could be made. However, this is not as powerful as supervisor and students working on a set of questions to be asked of a text, as the means to structure a collaborative editing conversation.

We also think it is useful to play with words. In the age of digital articles, the titles and abstracts of academic writing have become even more important. We encourage doctoral researchers to experiment with wordplay: skilful mobilizations of the pun, insertions of a clever double entendre, artful references to seminal texts, the humorous use and abuse of film, book and song titles; the quotable categorization. While none of this is necessary for competent doctoral scholarship, verbal quickstep can, if well executed, lead to work being memorable – and the scholar being remembered. Forming a distinctive writing style is part and parcel of the production of scholarly identity, and supervisors can help by simply spending a little time playing with their words.

We thus establish an ongoing conversation about the purpose of good writing. The real work of writing is not simply getting the ideas down. It is making the text live and sing. It is making an engaging and pleasurable reader-friendly text. As we have suggested in Chapter 6, signposting is part of this process. A dissertation will not by definition be lively if the reader is continually looking around to see where they are up to. The purpose of good doctoral writing is to make the concepts, findings and arguments potent and convincing. A dissertation is not a cemetery of dead ideas!

And complex writing need not use obfuscatory syntax. Difficult ideas and precise language can still be presented in nimble and striking prose. One way to address this challenge is to help doctoral writers find a balance of active and passive voice in their text when they are polishing their writing.

Balancing active and passive voice

Much academic writing is characterized by the use of the passive voice. The passive voice converts the object of the action into the subject of the sentence. The

one who is performing the action is not the subject and so disappears from view. If the passive voice carries on regardless, page after page after page, it *can* be tedious to read. It can also create long, over-complicated and awkward sentences that trip the reader up.

Most of the online writing workshops[10] and the academic writing advice books we have seen contain sensible examples of the kinds of passive voice constructions that, when used continually, make for a uniform dullness. The very worst of the writing tips suggests that doctoral writers should avoid the use of the passive voice. While this counters an apparent tacit rule that 'scientific' writing must use the passive voice, we think that this is equally silly advice. The passive voice *is* important in presenting research findings and in conducting discussions – as is the active voice. We suggest that both are required in doctoral writing.

Some decisions about the use of active and passive voice relate to how the writer carries the argument forward. Take for example, these three sentences in which a writer on men's health has chosen to put the issue he is discussing, 'the economics of the family', at the beginning of a short sentence, using the passive voice. This draws the reader's attention at the outset to the topic discussed in the paragraph.

> The economics of the family are adversely affected by male health problems. Illness among men often diminishes work productivity. When men become disabled or die, family income is usually reduced, often in the face of additional health care expenses.
>
> (Bonhomme, 2004: 145)

The first sentence, written in the passive, could be changed to the active voice to make it more powerful.

> *Male health problems* adversely affect the economics of the family. *Illness among men* often diminishes work productivity. When men become disabled or die, family income is usually reduced, often in the face of additional health care expenses.

If we apply our linguistic lens from Chapter 7, we can see that changing from active to passive voice has also changed the Theme of the sentence from 'The economics of the family' to 'Male health problems'. But this shift also creates a new problem of coherence. The first two sentences don't link well and they now have a similar Theme, 'Male health problems' and 'Illness among men'. It would make better reading to put the two short sentences together to make a longer, more complex, but equally readable two-part sentence.

> Male health problems not only diminish work productivity, but also adversely affect the economics of the family. When men become disabled or die, family income is usually reduced, often in the face of additional health care expenses.

This latter construction makes 'Male health problems' the Theme while retaining a balance of active and passive voice. The rewriting reorders the points made (that is, changes what comes first), leaving 'The economics of the family' as the topic to be discussed in the sentence that follows, while providing more logical argumentative flow. The reader is taken from the obvious, the problem with work productivity, to the less obvious and the point of the discussion, the economics of the family. And the rewriting of voice accomplishes this in a way that is unobtrusive and comfortable.

Other decisions about passive or active voice relate to the scholarly requirements for precision. For example, it is less informative to say 'professional training was conducted across the public sector', than to give details of who conducted the training, when, where and how often. To simply say 'the young people were socially excluded' is to deny the reader the opportunity to learn the details of the conditions, decisions, and institutional practices and policies that produced this exclusion. It is important to avoid passive constructions such as these which obscure connections and lack specificity.

However, deciding whether to use the active or passive voice is not just a matter of producing a good read, ensuring the logic of the argument and demonstrating scholarly rectitude. It is also connected to the target readership of the text. Take for example the following passage also discussing men's health.

> [1] Understanding masculinity is crucial for analyzing men's health problems. [2] For instance it is important to appreciate that many men take risks with their health because risk taking is one way men are brought up to prove their maleness to each other and themselves. [3] The long-standing and largely unresolved debate about the extent to which traditional characteristics of masculinity are pre-determined by biology should however be set aside if progress is to be made. [4] The attitude that there is an inherent and thus inevitable relation between maleness and poor health could distract from the chances of changing male attitudes and behaviour to bring about improvements in health.
>
> (Banks, 2004: 156)

The writer here takes an assertive stance using strong modality (see Chapter 5) such as 'is crucial', 'is important' and 'should'. But the use of the passive voice leaves many unanswered questions for the reader. In sentence 1 who should understand men's health problems? In 2 who should appreciate male risk-taking behaviour? In 3 who should set aside preconceived ideas about maleness and biology? And in sentence 4 whose attitude is likely to distract from changing male behaviour and thus bringing about improvements in men's health?

Now this may or may not be a problem if the writer is speaking about general social shifts. If we were to change the sentences to active voice, however, it may narrow the focus more than the writer intended, as in the following rewriting.

[1] It is critical that the medical profession understands masculinity in order to analyze men's health problems. [2] Medical practitioners need to appreciate that many men take risks with their health because risk taking is one way men are brought up to prove their maleness to each other and themselves. [3] Doctors and nurses in particular should set aside the long-standing and largely unresolved debate about the extent to which traditional characteristics of masculinity are pre-determined by biology in order to make progress. [4] If they believe that there is an inherent and thus inevitable relation between maleness and poor health, this attitude could distract from their chances of changing male attitudes and behaviour to bring about improvements in health.

(Reworking of Banks, 2004: 156)

What else has changed here apart from voice? By inserting in each sentence a subject who acts, we have changed the meaning. From a linguistic perspective, changing voice has also changed the pattern of Theme. Across the four sentences, phrases relating to the medical profession now come first: 'It is critical that the medical profession'; 'Medical practitioners'; 'Doctors and nurses in particular'; 'they'. If the writer intended to speak directly about the medical profession, then using the active voice to change the Theme in this way would be a worthwhile move away from generalities in which anyone and no one is required to change. On the other hand, the passage as rewritten now has a critical and vaguely accusatory tone: wagging a finger at the medical profession and telling it what it should do. This may be a more provocative stance than the writer wishes. And, hypothetically, if the intended reader is an examiner, and the writer a doctoral student, then she needs to understand the local textual mores and unwritten rules in order to decide whether the more generalized or specific text is likely to meet the requirements of the examining gaze.

Our point in exploring these examples is to suggest that both active and passive voice have their purposes and their effects. Making these matters the focus of supervisor conversation is a better tactic than blanket rules and prohibitions.

Supervisors can also help students add polish to their writings by looking at the textual features which literally hit the reader in the eye.

Pleasing the eye as well as the ear

A book, even a 'big book' like a doctoral dissertation, is an aesthetic object. It has visual qualities that are generally taken for granted in universities, but which producers of magazines and commercial books attend to closely. Rafts of trained artists debate layout and formatting of newspapers, leaflets, signage, packaging and books. Many of us have not been well served by the visual education we received at school, since school art is largely confined to particular traditions and 'high forms' of representational and abstract art practice (Atkinson and Dash, 2005). Thus, we take the designed nature of our environment and our 'textual

tools' as natural and given. Designers know that how a text appears to the eye can be integral to conveying a sense of lightness or heaviness, an impression of impenetrability or invitation, an effect of easy order or of clinical formula.

Many universities have strict regulations about the presentation of doctoral dissertations. They specify the size of page, the width and depth of margins, the size of font, the type of paper, the colour of the cover and the positioning of the title on the spine. However, even within these boundaries, there is room for some decision making.

Citation practices

Academic prose is generally recognizable because of its use of in-text citations. The following example (from Rogers *et al.* 2005: 369) could not be anything but an academic piece of writing!

Recent developments in Critical Discourse Analysis are rooted in much longer histories of language philosophy (Austin, 1962; Gramsci, 1973; Searle, 1969; Wittgenstein, 1953) ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967; Cicourel, 1974), the functional linguistics tradition in the United States (Gumperz, 1982; Silverstein and Urban, 1996), and Systemic Functional Linguistics in England, Canada and Australia (Halliday and Hasan, 1976). There are many subsections of discourse analysis within the social tradition, including speech act theory (Goffman, 1959, 1971), genre theory (Bakhtin, 1981; Martin, 1985; Hasan and Fries, 1995), intertextuality (Bakhtin, 1981; Kristeva, 1980, 1986, 1989; Lemke, 1992), discursive formations (e.g. Foucault, 1972, 1979, 1981; Lemke, 1992), conversation analysis (Collins, 1986; Gumperz, 1982; Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson, 1974; Schegloff, Ochs and Thompson, 1996), narrative analysis (Gee, 1992, 1994; Labov, 1972; Michaels, 1981; Propp, 1968; Scollon and Scollon, 1981; Wortham, 2001), discursive psychology (Davies and Harre, 1990; Edwards and Potter, 1992), ethnography of communication (Hymes, 1972), multi-modal analysis (Gee, 2003; Hodge and Kress, 1988; Kress and Van Leeuween, 1996; Scollon and Scollon, 2003), and critical discourse analysis.

This text is an eyeful. It takes effort on the reader's part to get through the citations to work out precisely what is being said. But this kind of citation can't be simply abandoned.

In the context of doctoral research, citations demonstrate that the dissertation writer knows the field. Indeed, if key texts are not referenced and cited, examiners may well query the depth of scholarship involved.

However, many doctoral researchers treat citations as the scholarly equivalent of Imelda Marcos's shoe collection. They like to signal their conspicuous consumption of academic literatures – the more the better. Other doctoral candidates have told us they need to buttress every statement with the appropriated

expertise of their betters, because doctoral candidates are regarded as having so little authority. Needless to say, the former view often leads to paragraphs where it is almost impossible for readers to disentangle the sense between the brackets, while the latter more often than not leads to low level cynicism about the purpose of referencing. Neither of these positions is the most useful approach to thinking about citation.

Citations are the scholarly means of correctly attributing the source of particular ideas, theories and findings. They demonstrate that all scholarship is located within a field to and with which it speaks. Citations counter the fallacy that scholarship is the work of a single scholar. Since all of us are always beholden to the efforts of others, the insertion of names and dates in brackets is our way of 'paying our dues'.

While doctoral researchers can't dodge the issue of citation, this doesn't mean that they just have to lie back and bracket. There are still some decisions that can be made about the use of within-text and footnoted citations, for example:

- How many references are needed to acknowledge an idea?
- When is it appropriate to put a few references and say 'for example' or 'as in' or 'see also'?
- If there is a large body of work in the area, is it a good idea to put in references from a range of dates or from a number of locations?

A further decision concerns whether to put all of the references in the text proper or whether to put some in endnotes or footnotes. Some endnotes or footnotes amplify details of points that are germane to the main argument, but not necessarily integral to the main narrative. But endnotes and footnotes can be a way of moving really hefty sets of references out of the way so that they don't affect the flow of the writing. Figure 8.1 shows what a page looks like when a doctoral writer has decided to send a discussion weighed down with citations out of the main frame.

There are no hard-and-fast rules about whether it is a good idea to footnote or endnote citations. And simply moving them doesn't work in all cases. The process of shifting attention from the main text to a footnote or endnote can be distracting for the reader. However, sending brackets off the main page can give the reader the option to read through the main body of the text without too much distraction, if they so choose.

We acknowledge that some universities and some disciplines may place restrictions on the use of citations, footnotes and endnotes. Nevertheless, a discussion about referencing helps doctoral writers focus on questions of readability and can lead to broader questions of the aesthetics of the page.

Texts that are easy on the eye

Aesthetic decisions can also be made about the adoption of numbered sections and subsections. Some disciplines require the use of numbered texts. Chapter 4 may

THESE TIMES

Those who study and comment on society agree that we are living in a time of great change,[1] but they cannot agree about the nature of those changes. Some studies of society centre on the rise of global technologies and communications (Virilio, 1997; Wresch, 1996), the dominance of the image and appearance (Baudrillard, 1988; Baudrillard, 1996; Perry,1998), and propose that there is a change from the dominance of modes of production to those of consumption (Baumam 1998b; Lee & Turner, 1996) although others argue they cannot be separated (LeFebvre, 1971). The importance of cultures – popular, youth, different, everyday, multiple, global, simulated, bricolaged[2] – and spatialities of difference (D. Harvey, 1993; Soja, 1996) dominate our lives.

It is suggested that, in this emerging new world, ethics and democratic politics need to be remade in order to prevent a lapse into fragmentation and relativism[3] and social isolationism.[4] Writers and scholars call this a postmodernist age which coexists with modernist industrial, and pre-modem, feudal social organisations (Gibson-Graham 1996) ... a postcolonial age (Bhaha, 1994; Gelder & Jacobs 1998; Jacobs, 1996; Said, 1991; Spivak, 1988) peopled by flaneurs (Benjamin, 1969, Tester, 1994), multiple shifting chimeric subjectivities (Serres, 1997).

Other scholars focus on the changing dimensions of the internationalisation of economies and changes in the organisation of work, using terms such as post Fordism, fast capitalism, and de-industrialisation.[5] Some suggest that the internationalisation of capitalism envisaged by Marx is being brought further into being by the digital flows of international financial exchange (Castells, 1996, 1997, 1998; Lash & Urry, 1994), the growth of world cities that function as nodes of exchange (Sassen, 1994), changes in the regulatory capacity of nation states (Beilharz, 1994; S. Bell, 1997; Hinkson, 1991; Hinkson, 1998; James, 1996; Offe, 1996; Pinch, 1997), the fragmentation of classes (Bradley, 1996; Marshall et al., 1997; Pakulski & Waters, 1996) and the prominence of localised, culturally based political action (Pile & Keith, 1997, Wark, 1997).

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[1] A point found in many texts (e.g. Bertens, 1995, Crook, Pakulski, & Waters, 1992; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Dunant & Porter. 1996; Foucault, 1977; S. Hall & Jacques, 1990; Hassan, 1993; Jameson, 1991, Latour, 1993, Lyotard, 1984, Taylor, 1992).

[2] Cultures are now seen as plural and highly fragmented and 'niched' (e g. Andrews, 1997; Aronowitz, Martinsons & Menser, 1996; Davis, 1997; du Gay, Hall, Janes, Mackay, & Negus, 1997; Featherstone, 1995; Fiske, 1993; Giroux, 1996; 1997; A. Hall, 1997; A. Hall & Jefferson, 1976, Hebdige, 1989; Humphery, 1998; Jameson & Miyoshi, 1998; C. Luke, 1996).

[3] There is a growing literature that seeks to put together a normative politics of postmodernity (Bauman, 1993; Fraser, 1997a; Mellucci, 1996; Mouffe, 1993; Soper, 1993; Sunstein, 1997; Szkudlarek, 1993, Touraine, 1997; Young, 1990).

[4] There is an emerging concern with questions of community and social networks (e.g. Davis, 1992; Etzioni, 1993; Farrar & Inglis, 1996; Frazer & Lacey, 1993; Putnam, 1993).

[5] This literature variously looks at organisations, labour process, subjectivity, the availability of work and its transformations (e.g. Burrows & Loader, 1994; C . Casey, 1995; du Gay, 1996; Gee, Hull, & Lankshear. 1996; Grint & Woolgar 1997; Kincheloe, 1999; Probert & Wilson, 1993; Reich, 1991; Rifkin, 1996; Ritzer, 1993).

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Figure 8.1   Footnoting citations (from Thomson, 1999: 67)